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SIPDIS

EUR/RPM, SCA/A

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2017
TAGS: [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [BU](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: BULGARIA UNDECIDED ON EXPANSION OF ISAF
COUNTERNARCOTICS AUTHORITIES

REF: STATE 97395

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief James Bigus for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) The Bulgarian Foreign Affairs and Defense Ministries have yet to reach consensus on SACEUR's proposed amendment to the Counternarcotics Annex of the ISAF Operations Plan to authorize ISAF forces to interdict narcotics production and trafficking facilities. According to COL Stefan Yanev, Director of Defense Policy and Planning, Bulgaria had no objections from a military perspective to the amendment as presented, but it hoped the Afghan National Army would play the leading role in counternarcotics operations. The Director of NATO Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgi Panayotov was more circumspect. Bulgaria does in principle support new counternarcotics authorities for ISAF, he said, but Bulgaria had not finished weighing the merits of the UK plan versus the US plan. He expressed concern that perhaps too broad a counternarcotics approach by ISAF could alienate farmers and local elders and distract ISAF from its primary security mission. Bulgaria would continue to examine the two proposals and would be interested in discussing the issue in more detail at the NATO Military Committee meetings in Sofia.
McEldowney